

THE WILSON BULLETIN

Published at Sioux City, Iowa, by the Wilson Ornithological Club, with the co-operation of the following societies, viz.:

The Nebraska Ornithologists' Union.
The Iowa Ornithologists' Union.
The Kentucky Ornithological Society.
The Tennessee Ornithological Society.

The subscription price in the United States is \$1.50 a year, and 50 cents a number; in all other countries of the International Postal Union the price is \$2.00 a year, and 60 cents a number. Subscriptions and orders for single copies should be addressed to the Secretary, Prof. Gordon Wilson, Bowling Green, Kentucky, U. S. A.

EDITORIAL

The Editor has received a number of communications concerning Miss Sherman's wren article in the March BULLETIN. Some were in the nature of inquiry, others were in protest. It was expected that many of our readers would be unprepared for this characterization of the House Wren.

It is a severe indictment of a species. There need be no question as to the accuracy of Miss Sherman's observations, or as to the accuracy of the other testimony quoted. There may be a question as to how general are the traits here described. Those who wish to defend the good name of the House Wren must now present the evidence of good character. It should be gathered with equal care and precision. Miss Sherman has shown that certain wren families have performed certain vicious acts; that they are inimical to other native birds. The defenders of the House Wren should be ready to show that there are certain families of the House Wren which do not perform such vicious acts, and which are not inimical to other native birds. Then the evidence can be weighed.

It is very clear that this program places a very difficult task upon the wren defenders. It is perhaps much easier to catch a wren in the act of destroying eggs, than it may be to follow individual wrens through a season and then testify to their good characters. However, this now seems to be the logical necessity in the defense of the wrens. The mere assertion of innocence on the basis of desultory observation will not suffice to quash the indictment against the tribe of wrens.

Rats, as a group, are outlawed on the ground of depredations by individual rats. It is true that the witnesses against the rat are numerous; but it now remains to be seen which way the future testimony will go in the case of the House Wren, now that the indictment has been made. The season of 1925 should produce such testimony.

And, suppose the charges against the House Wren are adequately shown, what then? We do not understand that it is proposed to inaugurate a campaign of extermination against the House Wren. Knowing the character and faults of the House Wren, people may then decide whether they wish to have other birds or the House Wren on their premises. If they prefer to have wrens, the matter is easy; if they prefer a larger assortment of the smaller native birds, they

will probably find it desirable to take down the wren boxes and withdraw all special protection and encouragement. To this there can be no objection on the part of anyone. What further steps may be properly taken to keep the House Wren off the premises is a problem which cannot be solved at this time.

The main question right now is the determination of the House Wren's status as a good or bad citizen. Let us endeavor to keep an open mind; and above all, let us be willing to know the facts, even though we may choose to exercise a bit of sentiment in our personal attitude toward this bird.

Attention may here be called to the note in the present number of the BULLETIN by Miss Katie M. Roads on the behavior of the House Wren toward the Bewick's Wren.

We believe that our readers will be much interested in Mr. Whitney's article on the martins. Perhaps it may not be amiss to add a little emphasis to his remarks on the danger in building bird boxes of thin boards. If it is unwise to build martin houses of thin boards, the same is probably true of all other bird houses. We have had no experience with bird boxes made of tar paper, but on the surface it looks like a bad proposition. Those who have had experience should testify.

The place for the next annual meeting of the W. O. C. has not yet been determined. In due time, however, the matter will be decided. In the meantime let each member of the Club consider the possibility of a place on the program. Make selection of the title of your paper now, so that later on the work of building the program will be a delight to your officers.

The Editor is anxious to secure these W. O. C. publications for his personal file, viz., *Ornithologists' and Oologists' Semi-Annual*, first four numbers, for 1889 and 1890, and the *Wilson Quarterly*, April, 1891.

We will again make the request for information concerning the location of complete sets of the WILSON BULLETIN.

Dr. Lynds Jones, former Editor, will be on leave of absence from Oberlin College during the year 1925-1926. He will leave Oberlin in June and return in the autumn of 1926. It is known that he will be somewhere in the southwest during this time, but he writes that he does not "intend to be reachable". Correspondents will thus understand the matter if letters fail in delivery. Orders for recent issues of the WILSON BULLETIN will be filled from Sioux City; older issues probably cannot be supplied until Dr. Jones' return.